

LEBAYALAN

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TO RUEHLE/SECSTATE WASHDC NIATC IMMEDIATE 9280
INFO RUEHOM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 4388
BT
S E C R E T BEIRUT 06044

LIMDIS

CIA FOR DOO/NEA/ARN

E.O. 12956: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PTER, LE, US

SUBJECT: LEVIN KIDNAPPING; POSSIBLE MAALUF VISIT
TO BEIRUT ON BEHALF OF JEREMY LEVIN

REFS: (A) STATE 192788, (B) STATE 194503

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. POLOFF CALLED ON DAR AL-FATWA DIRECTOR DR. MUHAMMAD QUNATLI ON JULY 3 TO DISCUSS ADVISABILITY OF NSULI AND MAALUF COMING TO BEIRUT TO SEE SHAYKH FADLALLAH (SHAYKH KHALID AL-URAYMIT HAS BEEN INCOMMUNICADO IN NORTH LEBANON SINCE ID AL-FATWA). QUNATLI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NSULI IS HIS COUSIN AND THAT HE HAS SPOKEN WITH HIM ABOUT THE LEVIN CASE. HOWEVER, HE PROFESSED NOT TO KNOW WHETHER NSULI AND MAALUF PLAN TO VISIT BEIRUT.

3. QUNATLI RECOUNTED DAR AL-FATWA'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN LEVIN'S RELEASE. LEVIN, HE SAID, IS BEING HELD BY HIZBALLAH. QUNATLI SAID THAT HE HAD DESIGNATED AN INTERMEDIARY TO APPROACH SHAYKH MUHAMMAD QUNATLI REQUESTING FADLALLAH TO REQUEST FADLALLAH TO USE HIS INFLUENCE WITH HIZBALLAH ON LEVIN'S BEHALF. QUNATLI REPORTED THAT FADLALLAH HAD GIVEN A NON-COMMITTAL RESPONSE, REFUSING TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HIZBALLAH HAD LEVIN, BUT AGREEING TO SEE IF THERE WERE ANYTHING HE COULD DO. SUBSEQUENTLY, HIZBALLAH WARNED BOTH FADLALLAH (WHOM QUNATLI MAINTAINED IS NOT ACTUALLY A MEMBER OF HIZBALLAH) AND QUNATLI NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE LEVIN CASE. QUNATLI REPORTED, THIS LEFT FADLALLAH IN AN EMBARRASSING POSITION, HE OBSERVED.

4. QUNATLI THEN TELEPHONED FADLALLAH IN POLOFF'S PRESENCE TO INQUIRE WHETHER FADLALLAH HAD ANY REPLY OF THE CASE. ACCORDING TO QUNATLI, FADLALLAH CLAIMED THAT HIZBALLAH HAD DENIED HOLDING LEVIN. FADLALLAH SAID THAT HE HAD NOTHING FURTHER TO ADD. QUNATLI CONCLUDED CONVERSATION BY ASKING

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FADLALLAH, MUHAMMAD HUSSAYN

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FADLALLAH TO INFORM HIM IF HE HEARD ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THIS MATTER. FADLALLAH SAID THAT HE WOULD DO SO. POLOFF IN TURN THANKED QUNATLI FOR HIS HELP AND OFFERED TO BE IN TOUCH WITH MAALUF AND NSULI, IF THEY COME TO BEIRUT.

5. POLOFF WILL BE MEETING TONIGHT, JULY 3, WITH DAR AL-FATWA ENVISSARY TO FADLALLAH AND CIN BUREAU CHIEF DULMAGE. MORE DETAILS OF DAR AL-FATWA'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH FADLALLAH MAY EMERGE IN THIS MEETING. HOWEVER, ON THE BASIS OF POLOFF'S MEETING WITH QUNATLI IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT THE DAR AL-FATWA HAS GOTTEN VERY FAR WITH FADLALLAH. WHILE WE SEE LITTLE HARM IN MAALUF AND NSULI ATTEMPTING TO MEET WITH FADLALLAH, WE ALSO HAVE LITTLE HOPE THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD PRODUCE BETTER RESULTS THAN THE DAR AL-FATWA'S CONTACTS WITH FADLALLAH TO DATE.
BARTHOLOMEW
END OF MESSAGE

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